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TO: Secretary Scott Hassett

FROM: Randy Stark, Chief Warden, Bureau of Law Enforcement

SUBJECT: October 2005 Four-day Zone-T and CWD Zone Earn-A-Buck Hunts

October Zone-T & CWD Zone Earn-A-Buck Hunts: October 27 – 30, 2005

Hunting trends and issues:

Hunting Pressure – For the most part, hunting activity was similar to or somewhat lower than past years. Despite the favorable weather conditions, wardens generally reported that hunting pressure was low on the first two days of the season with increased pressure on Saturday and then low again on Sunday, especially with the rain in some parts of the state. Most of the pressure could be found near the opening and closing hours. Mid-day, wardens found it difficult to locate deer hunters out in the woods.

Statewide, wardens report that public hunting areas were again the primary site hunted. Private lands were very lightly hunted if they were hunted at all. This observation was made in all regional reports. Many hunters were frustrated because the pressure drove most of the deer onto private property. Some private landowners in the South Central Region stated that they were not hunting deer because they did not want to chase deer off their property knowing that they could shoot a buck without “earning” it after the start of the 9 day season.

Urban Sprawl and Land Use – Wardens continue to see the impacts of urban sprawl and development, especially in the vicinity of metropolitan areas. Every year the number of acres both directly and indirectly impacted by “sprawl” increases and has negatively impacted hunting in areas surrounding Southeast Region, the Fox River Valley, Madison, Eau Claire and La Crosse. This in turn will continue to impact urban deer populations as houses being built in many woodlots eliminate hunting areas and the ability to control deer numbers. These woodlots become refuges for the deer that eventually come out and eat the neighbor’s crops, or landscape shrubs. Urban sprawl also is concentrating hunters on public lands in these metropolitan counties as opportunities to hunt on private lands are diminished. Warden Supervisor Jeremy Plautz observed that in Waukesha County the vast majority of hunting took place on state properties. Much of this is due to development and fragmentation of the larger private properties in Waukesha.

Many hunters in the South Central Region expressed sentiments about it becoming harder and harder to find a place to hunt. Rural development continues to have an impact as the outer edges of many cities, and even smaller towns, are expanding. Big tracts of land are being split up and new houses are being built on smaller parcels. Several wardens commented that the rural landscape is becoming so fragmented that it is making hunting with firearms more difficult

every year. Some family farms have been replaced with small subdivisions and areas where hunting is not safe or practical because of residences.

In the Eau Claire area, wardens observed that as homes get built in the country, the big hunting parties become much less common. In addition, many farms are getting much larger and comprise large blocks of land, often 1,000 acres or more. However, permission to hunt these farms is sometimes very difficult to obtain. In Chippewa County, a number of these large farms have closed their lands to Zone T hunting in an effort to control who hunts and where. As they are busy with crops and don't have the time to monitor the hunters, they just shut it off to all hunting for this season.

In the South Central Region as well as other parts of the state, hunters have to lease property in order to hunt. Access to private land continues to be an issue in many parts of the state.

Youth Participation

The statewide teachers' convention on Thursday and Friday allowed school age youth an opportunity to get out and hunt either by themselves or with adults. Overall, pressure seemed fairly consistent with past Zone T hunts.

Some wardens reported it was nice to see young hunters in the field with their parents enjoying the opportunity to experience their first deer hunt. They expressed concern about potentially eliminating it as many dedicated deer hunters set this season aside to hunt with their children.

Many wardens commented that the youth hunt is underutilized.

The following are other examples of youth hunting experiences:

- Warden Dale Hochhausen of Racine saw quite a few youths out hunting with their parents. One parent called Hochhausen and asked if she was required to have a license and carry a firearm to take her son hunting. She said she was going to take her son deer hunting and wasn't certain of the laws. It was nice to see even non-hunting parents taking their kids out.
- Warden Bob Lee in Washington County reports, "I checked a Hunter Education Instructor and a young hunter. The young hunter told me a story that he had a chance to shoot a doe but he was shaking so bad that he was afraid to shoot because he thought he would miss. The young hunter was all smiles as he headed back into the woods with his mentor."
- Warden Rick Wolff of Ozaukee County checked a family group of hunters coming out of deer drive from a farmer's woodlot. A 14 year old youth hunter had big smile across his face when the warden asked who shot the doe deer in the back of the pick-up truck. His father stated that this was his son's first deer and that the deer would be processed and given to the farmer for permission to hunt on the farmstead. Warden Wolff took a digital picture of the event and emailed it to his mother's computer the same day. His mother responded back via email thanking Rick for helping to make this hunt a special day.

- Warden Casey Krueger (Portage) received a call from a man in Columbia County. He said that his 12 year old grandson had recently taken Warden Krueger's hunter education class. He asked Warden Krueger to stop by the farm when he was in the area. When Warden Krueger arrived, the 12-year old hunter came running out to him and started yelling, "Casey, come see my deer!" and took him over to an antlerless deer he had harvested the previous day. While Warden Krueger admired the doe, the young hunter stated "that was yesterday, look over here!" On the back of his dad's tailgate was a 210 pound 12-point buck. The young hunter relived the hunt with Warden Krueger and thanked him for the hunter safety class.
- Warden Paul Nadolski (Poynette) came across a few first time hunters who had bagged their first deer. One story that stands out is a young 12-year old who was hunting in the Herd Reduction Zone and shot a doe, then within 10 minutes shot a 10 point buck. The young man was very proud and was smiling from ear to ear.

Hunting related shooting incidents:

In the West Central Region on Friday, Wardens Matt Modjeski (Sparta), Mark Little (Tomah), and Supervisor Bill Schwengel (Eau Claire) investigated a hunting accident in Jackson County. The victim and shooter were both hunting with firearms from the ground but were not members of the same hunting party. The victim was dressed in blaze orange clothing in a heavily wooded area on DNR property. The shooter thought he was shooting at the white brisket of a deer, but shot the victim in the upper left leg. The victim was transported by helicopter ambulance to UW Madison Hospital. The Jackson County Sheriff's Department and Wisconsin Conservation Wardens are continuing to investigate.

While there were no hunting related shooting incidents injuring persons in the Northeast Region, three separate houses were struck with bullets from hunters:

- Warden Todd Wippermann (Clintonville) reported that he had one residence on the edge of the Village of Embarrass struck with a shotgun slug during the season. No one was home at time and no suspects were identified. Appears that the slug came from a good distance away.
- Warden Dave Algrem (Wautoma) reported that there was a home shot on Friday. Wardens April Dombrowski and Algrem assisted the Waushara County Sheriff with the investigation and eventually located the shooter(s).
- Warden Doug Bilgo reported that the Fond du Lac County Sheriff investigated a complaint of a house hit by a slug in a subdivision located southeast of Fond du Lac.

There were no hunting related shooting incidents in the Northern, South Central and Southeast Regions.

Hunters in a "Positive" light:

As in previous Zone T seasons, some hunters mistakenly killed deer which had antlers longer than 3" in length (yet were easily covered by the ears) and did the right thing by reporting their violations to local wardens. These deer were salvaged for someone to utilize and in most cases warnings were given to the hunters involved (citations were issued in other cases).

A true test of the hunter's character and his appreciation for an outdoor ethic is revealed by his response to a mistake that he or she has made. Some examples of mistaken buck shooting:

- Warden Mike Young (Shiocton) reported that *"two hunters turned themselves in after shooting a buck with one 5" spike. The hunter who shot the deer felt terrible about the mistake and said he is always telling others in his hunting party to make sure there are no antlers before shooting then he shot the spike. The hunters said they had to turn themselves in because it was the right thing to do."*
- In another case, Wardens Mike Stahl (Oconto) reported that he *"did have several hunters who shot bucks turn themselves in as they wished to do the right thing. One was a youth who was hunting with his mother who is a non-hunter. She did make her son turn himself in after shooting a legal antlered buck. A warning was given and the deer was donated to hunt for hungry with the family to pay the processing costs."*

Tips from Hunters and Others Greatly Help Wardens Do Their Job

It is promising that hunters are continuing to police themselves realizing the image of the sport rests on their shoulders. Many wardens reported hunters calling in complaints about other hunters and illegal activity taking place.

Highlighted cases:

Baiting and feeding

Wardens throughout the state continue to deal with illegal baiting and feeding violations. It should be noted that several counties in the region have total baiting and feeding bans, while others allow the practice. Some notable baiting and feeding cases made during the Zone T season include:

- Warden Judi Nigbor (Montello) and Warden Supervisor Carl Mesman (Wautoma) responded to a call regarding a hunter that had shot a buck in a CWD unit and the deer ran onto the neighbor's property. The neighbor did not allow the hunter to retrieve the deer and the neighbor recovered and tagged the buck under his disabled permit privilege. While investigating the complaint, the wardens found that the property where the buck ran onto was baited with shelled corn by at least three of the stands. Citations will be issued for illegal baiting and feeding.
- Warden Mike Young (Shiocton) located three large bait piles on one property prior to the season and worked the area for hunters during the bow season. Young finally located a hunter on stand on Friday night. The bait piles had been recharged that day. Young contacted the hunter who stated he was not aware of the baiting law. Young explained the 2-gallon rule to which the hunter stated his brother must have placed the extra bait. Young asked if his brother was on the property and the subject stated not yet but he would be tomorrow. Young stated he had been watching the area for the past week and the only person on the property had been the hunter. Subject admitted to adding the extra bait. Young explained the reasons for the law and issued a citation for illegal baiting.
- Warden Wade Romberg (Appleton) contacted a hunter who was warned for illegal baiting last year when he received a citation for group deer hunting violations. He decided to

put out a loader bucket of apples and some corn again this year. By the time T-zone rolled around, the apples were nearly gone, but a citation was issued as there is no baiting in Calumet County.

- Warden Dave Walz (Watertown) received more complaints of illegal baiting this year than in any past year. On one complaint, Walz worked a bait site prior to the 4 day gun season and after checking it a couple times found a hunter, the son of the landowner, hunting near a pile of apples and shelled corn he admitted placing there. There were about 5 gallons of apples and corn total and Dodge County has a baiting and feeding ban. The hunter was cited and advised he could not hunt over the site.
- Wardens John Buss (Sauk City) and Warden Michael Green (Wisconsin Dells) caught a suspect a few years ago that Buss has cited several times over the past 20 years. The suspect could not buy a license because he was revoked for non-payment on child support. Buss received a complaint that the suspect was hunting again and this time, baiting. The wardens found a homemade feeder for deer and scattered bait. After checking the area this fall numerous days and nights, wardens observed the suspect shoot a deer from his box deer stand. Wardens located the deer before the suspect did and were sitting close to the deer when the suspect put someone else's tag on the deer. Buss and Green seized numerous pieces of equipment; a deer, gun, bow, feeder, etc. Charges will be filed for criminal deer violations, baiting, hunting after hours, hunting without a back tag, blaze orange violations, and shooting protected species. The first case has not gone to trial yet and the suspect was caught again.
- Warden Scott Bowe (Cornell) received a complaint about a bowhunter using too much bait. Bowe located the stand and contacted the hunter after hours. The man was hunting over at least 10 gallons of bait and had his back tag in his pocket. He was not wearing blaze orange and was hunting the property without consent of the caretaker. Citations were issued.
- Warden Scott Thiede (Eau Claire) issued four citations on Saturday for unlawfully placing feeding material to attract wild animals. Two hunters had placed 100 pounds of shelled corn on the ground near bow hunting stands. Two landowners were using gravity feeders, one on a timer, to attract deer to the backsides of their hunting cabins. Both feeders contained in excess of 200 pounds of shelled corn.
- Warden Paul Sickman (Baldwin) had received a complaint dealing with hunting over illegal bait during the archery season, but could not place a hunter in the stand. On the Thursday of Zone T, Sickman worked the stand and had the hunter present with a crossbow. The hunter had a Class A permit and knew the legal limit on bait was 2 gallons. A citation was issued for hunting over illegal bait.
- On Saturday evening, Warden Mike Disher (Chilton) responded to a series of late shots on private land in Calumet County. Disher arrived at the location and observed a vehicle leaving the suspect's driveway. Disher followed the vehicle to a local registration station and observed an antlerless deer strapped to the back of the vehicle. Disher noticed the deer's chest cavity was still steaming. Disher spoke with the suspect who repeatedly said the deer was shot during legal hunting hours. During the contact, Disher noticed

two empty corn/feed sacks and a partially full salt/mineral sack in the back of the suspect's truck. Upon investigation, Disher located several stands that were illegally baited with corn, apples, and salt. Near one of the stands Disher found empty shell casings and the gut pile from the deer. Disher issued a citation for the illegal bait and seized the deer. Baiting and feeding of deer has been prohibited in Calumet County since 2002.

Illegal Deer Cases

- Warden Casey Krueger (Portage) and Warden Supervisor David Holmes investigated a complaint regarding illegal hunting and deer poaching in northern Columbia County. On the property, wardens discovered five hunters who had an untagged buck along with a tagged nub buck. It was also determined the buck was shot the previous day and the hunters shot the nub buck the next day to try and cover the buck that was shot due to the earn a buck requirement. The wardens further determined the nub buck was dragged from the woods untagged. The wardens discovered another party member had been hunting without a deer license, and that he had also hunted small game back in August without a license or hunter safety, as well as during the closed season, and that the subjects had put out an illegal salt block. Violations included failure to immediately tag and validate, transport illegal deer, hunting with improper license, transport buck deer without required authorization, hunting without a license, and hunt game animals during the closed season. Fines totaled more than \$3,000 and deer were seized.
- Warden Boyd Richter (Janesville) responded to a complaint of a hunter shooting a buck without having a buck tag and then finding someone to tag the buck hours later. The investigation revealed the suspect shot the deer, leaving it lay untagged, and then returned later in the evening to gut and drag the deer out. Richter seized the rack, cape, and meat from the deer. Several citations were issued.
- Warden Shawna Stringham (Viroqua) received a complaint from the Vernon County Sheriff's Department about a trespassing complaint and also had some hunters that possessed buck deer and did not have buck tags. There were two bucks that had been shot in a CWD area. The hunter explained to Stringham that he swore the first deer that he shot was a doe. Then he explained that 20 minutes later a buck came out of the woods and he had shot and killed his second deer. When the individual went to tag the two deer he saw that the first deer that he had shot was a six point buck. The individual explained to Stringham that he was going to do the right thing by going to the registration station and explaining what the mistake he had made. The hunters then showed Stringham both deer. The hunter failed to explain that he had kicked the antlers off the first deer and then was going to register the deer along with the nine point buck. Warden Stringham issued a citation and seized both bucks.
- Wardens Lyle Manteuffel (Wausau) and Supervisor Randy Falstad (Wisconsin Rapids) investigated a complaint of an individual shooting a buck, blowing the top of the head off with his rifle and registering it as a doe. Citations were issued for hunting with improper license and shooting from the road.
- Warden Supervisor Dave Oginski of Park Falls contacted a subject who shot a buck and attempted to convert it into a doe by shooting the antlers off. The bullet wouldn't do the

job so he used a knife to cut away the remaining skull and hide and threw the antlers in the woods.

Road Hunting

- Warden Nathan Kroeplin (Madison) was able to track down an individual on Thursday who shot a pheasant from his car off of the road a few days earlier. Kroeplin noticed a vehicle matching the description given by the complainant in the Brooklyn public hunting grounds. Kroeplin checked his alibi and found it to be not credible, so Kroeplin went back and interviewed the individual a second time. This time he received a confession that the subject had in fact shot from his vehicle.
- Warden Brad Biser of Brule and Deputy Warden Feind responded to an area of private land after Deputy Feind heard a rifle shot. Upon arrival and finding the landowner was not home, further checking found two individuals dragging out an adult doe. The shooter had shot across a county trunk highway, down a pipeline on private land. The shooter was cited for shooting across a highway (\$203) and county trespass (\$335), while his partner was cited for county trespass (\$335). The shooter was cited for trespass two years ago in Bayfield County during the muzzleloader season.
- Warden John Buss (Sauk City) received a complaint on some suspects shooting from the road and 20 minutes after the close of the season. Warden Buss and Warden Michael Green (Wisconsin Dells) were following up on another complaint and were 20 miles away. The Sauk County Sheriff's Department sent a deputy to the scene and found the suspects down the road at a farm house. Wardens Buss and Green investigated and found that a suspect shot from the road and after hours, hitting a deer. Two citations were issued.

Warrants and Felons Carrying Firearms and Assisting Other Law Enforcement Agencies

- Warden David Horzewski (Reedsburg) and Deputy Warden Paul Zajackowski received a complaint of a felon who was deer hunting with a firearm. While checking the area for hunters and license compliance the wardens located the hunter in an elevated stand almost 80 acres in from the road. They worked their way to the hunter and caught him by surprise. They secured the hunter's rifle and a hunting knife. Horzewski ran a records check with the Sauk County Sheriff's Department dispatch to confirm that he was a convicted felon. The hunter had a lengthy record that went back to 1978 or so when he served 3 ½ years in prison for car theft. Upon a search of his hunting bag and his vehicle for additional weapons, two marijuana pipes were located along with a small bag of marijuana. Wardens confiscated the hunter's rifle and tags as evidence, since he had earned two buck stickers during the hunting season so far.
- One night after working a shining and shooting complaint, Warden Dave Walz (Watertown) swung into a public hunting grounds parking area where there has been a history of littering, underage drinking and off-roading problems. Walz saw a truck drive off the road into the fields on the public hunting grounds, and then take off spinning around in the parking lot. When Walz stopped the vehicle with three adult males inside, he found the two passengers to be extremely intoxicated and in possession of an open container of beer. The driver had a revoked license, the owner of the truck was too

drunk to take over driving, and the other passengers had a revoked license as well. The vehicle was towed and the driver cited for operating after revocation by the Dodge County Sheriffs Department. Walz also issued him a citation for operating off roads on the state land.

- Warden Amie Egstad (Neenah) observed 2 males in their 20's fishing from a fishing pier area by a CTH M bridge on Black Otter Lake. Upon checking for fishing licenses, neither had valid licenses. A Mobile Data Computer check showed one subject was wanted for a warrant out of Marinette County. Egstad was parked right in front of Hortonville PD and had 2 officers step out of their office door and across the street to arrest the subject.

Licensing Violations

- Wardens Dale Hochhausen and Joe Paul stopped at a State Wildlife Area in Kenosha County and decided to walk the property to check hunters. The wardens walked about a mile and came across two hunters in the woods. Hochhausen checked one of the hunter's backtags and asked the individual which vehicle they came in. The individual described the vehicle and Hochhausen remembered the vehicle had Illinois license plates. The individual's backtag showed he lived at an address in Kenosha. The hunter said he had lived at the address for about two years and moved out a month ago. The hunter said he was currently living on an Army base in Illinois. The hunter said his companion also lived at the Kenosha address. Hochhausen walked over to the other hunter, who also had a WI resident deer license with a McFarland address. This hunter said he lived in McFarland with his sister-in-law. Upon further questioning it was determined this individual did not live in McFarland and only visited his sister-in-law every few weeks. This hunter also stated that he never lived with his friend in Kenosha. Hochhausen recontacted the first subject who confessed he had lied and stated he never lived in Kenosha, but used his friend's address in Kenosha to obtain a Wisconsin resident gun deer license. The wardens learned this individual lived in Texas and his companion actually lived in Kentucky. A citation was issued to both for Fraud in Obtaining a License and they posted over \$800. Upon issuing the citation, one of the individual's shook Hochhausen's hand and said "I'm as guilty as all heck."
- Warden Bill Miller (Adams) received a complaint two weeks prior to the T-Zone season of two men hunting with bows, trespassing and no back-tags on. Miller was working a shining complaint about a half mile north of the bow hunting complaint when Miller apprehended two men from Illinois with a flashlight and crossbow that were on foot and attempting to kill deer. Upon further investigation Miller determined that the two were the same men hunting two weeks earlier. Neither had hunting licenses because they said they had never taken hunter education. Miller seized the bows and will be requesting criminal charges for hunting deer without licenses from two weeks earlier and shining with a crossbow that night.

Going Armed While Intoxicated

Warden Ken Thomson (Waupaca) contacted a group out hunting and the first hunter he checked appeared intoxicated. Field sobriety tests along with a preliminary breath test indicated that the subject was intoxicated. After arresting the subject, an Intoxilizer test revealed that subjects Blood Alcohol Concentration was over the .08 standard limit.

Escaped Bull Elk on the Loose

Warden Cletus Alsteen (Green Lake) received several reports of a bull elk loose in the Grand River Wildlife Area during the Zone T season. The area elk framers were contacted to see if they were missing any elk and all reported back that they had all of their animals. Since it is unknown where the elk came from, we are working to try and kill the elk as soon as possible.

ATV Enforcement

- Wardens Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) and Stefan Fabian (Green Bay) decided to park along one of the ATV routes on Saturday to catch up on some paperwork. While there, several ATV's could be heard coming down the road at a high rate of speed. Using radar, Warden Stahl "clocked" these individuals on radar at 69 miles per hour as they ran side by side down the roadway in a 25 mile per hour zone. Citations issued for operating at a speed that was unreasonable or improper.
- Warden Scott Bowe (Cornell) contacted a hunter with a loaded rifle on an ATV. The man said he didn't have time to unload his rifle because he heard a man scream and yell for help. The man said he was coming out of the woods to get help. Bowe also discovered that the man had an untagged deer in the woods. The man said he shot the deer about 45 minutes earlier. Bowe contacted neighboring landowners and took a ride through the area on an ATV. Bowe was unable to locate anyone in need of help.

Other Seasons Go On.....

- Wardens Lance Burns (Gordon) and Mark DiSalvo (Cable) worked on a complaint of subjects possibly over bagging on walleyes. Subjects were observed double tripping and when contacted the group of 6 had 40 walleyes. For the waters they were fishing, they could only possess 24 walleyes.
- Salmon Harvest - Warden Stahl (Oconto Falls) was contacted on Sunday morning after the time change by the Marinette Sheriff's office. They stated that they had a Peshtigo Police Officer out with several subjects by the Badger Paper Mill Dam on the Peshtigo River with a large number of illegally caught salmon. Warden Stahl responded and met with three subjects being detained by the Peshtigo Officer. They had 27 salmon. They said two of their group had gone back to a local campground. Subjects had fished in an area that could not be fished after sunset. They possessed illegal hooks and admitted to foul hooking/snagging all the fish. The two adults were cited by the Peshtigo Officer for trespass as well. Warden Stahl took the subjects back to the campground where the other two suspects were awakened. All subjects were told they would be receiving citations for snagging salmon and fishing at night in the closed night fishing area. They were warned for possession of oversized hooks and possessing fish over the daily bag limit and failure to release foul hooked fish. A total of 10 citations will be issued.
- Warden Jill Schartner (Monroe) was traveling north on County Hwy X stopping at Hwy 92 when she received a call from a cooperator stating he had just seen a pheasant hunter shoot a pheasant from the roadway. Schartner was within a mile of the location and with the cooperator giving the correct license plate number, the first vehicle Schartner passed was the suspect's. When Schartner stopped them they were found to have two uncased guns and admitted to not wearing their blaze orange because they were in such a hurry when they saw the pheasants near the road, they forgot to put it on. There was no evidence to prove where they shot from and the cooperator was not interested in testifying in court, so the subjects were warned for hunting within 50 feet of the roadway.

They were both fined for having uncased guns in their vehicle and hunting pheasants without wearing the required blaze orange

In the Right Place at the Right Time

Warden Doug Bilgo (Campbellsport) was walking into an area where a couple of shots were heard at about 5 minutes after legal shooting hours. While walking to that area Bilgo heard 4 more shots fired 15 minutes after the close in the opposite direction. Bilgo changed direction and went to the area of the 4 shots being fired. As Bilgo approached he observed two hunters dressed in blaze orange. The one hunter commented to the other as he walked past, "What are you shooting at? Don't you know the season is closed?" The second hunter responded back that his friend fired at a doe and a fawn in the open field. The first hunters stated "he was going to report it to the Warden." Warden Bilgo then joined the conversation, stating no need to call, I'm already here. The hunter responded back, "Alright! Great timing!"

A Bear Hunt You Don't Want

Warden Jeremy Peery of Ladysmith had a hunter shoot a black bear as it climbed up his deer stand. Warden Russ Fell of Rice Lake and Peery investigated the scene thoroughly and all evidence that they found supported the hunter's version of the events. Apparently, the hunter was sitting in a deer stand located about 100 yards from an old bear bait site. A sow bear and a yearling cub wandered into the hunter's area, and when the sow was at the wooden deer stand ladder, the hunter stood up and stomped on the stand to scare the bear off. Instead of running off, the bear climbed the ladder and did not stop at the hunter's shouts. When the bear reached the top rung, the hunter shot the bear and then fell from his stand. The bear ran about 25 yards and then died. There were fresh claw marks all the way up the wooden ladder and the bullet path through the bear matched the hunter's story. The bear was salvaged and sold on a seizure tag.

Hunter/User Conflicts:

Trespass - Land access continues to be a significant limitation on hunter participation. Some stop hunting, some get permission from other landowners, some buy or lease their own lands, while others hunt the public lands. There are a small percentage of persons who just hunt wherever they want in hopes they don't get caught.

The tension between adjoining landowners increases when deer are involved.

Neighboring Landowner Conflict - Warden Darren Kuhn (Kewaunee) was notified about a trespass conflict where a hunter had shot a deer that crossed onto an adjoining property. The hunter had previously had permission to enter the adjoining property but was not aware that the adjoining property had changed hands. The new landowner contacted the sheriff's department in reference to the trespass issue. The landowner retrieved the hunter's deer and allowed the hunter to claim the deer. The landowner was more upset about the hunter shooting a doe than the trespass issue. The landowner is opposed to shooting does. All worked out in this incident and taught the hunter a valuable lesson about researching land ownership prior to hunting season. The hunter was not cited for trespassing

Blaze orange for non-deer hunters continues to be a problem. Small game hunters in Zone T units are about as likely to be wearing blaze orange as not. However, in non-Zone T units on the Youth Hunt, its closer to 90% of the non-deer hunters are not wearing blaze orange.

Wardens issued many warnings for these violations as it is just too easy for people to not be aware of this requirement.

ATV's & Hunters – Some hunters in the Suring area of Oconto County complained that the ATV's were impacting their deer hunting success and that the ATV trails should be closed during the deer season

Warden Supervisor Ron Preder reported that the Kettle Moraine State Forest access points/parking lots were posted with "Zone T" information signs. This probably helped to minimize any user conflicts with other forest users.

Search and Rescue efforts:

Statewide, wardens responded to several calls for their service in searching for lost persons. In Door County, Warden Mike Neal was requested by the Door County Sheriff's Department to search for lost boaters.

On Saturday, October 29th, shortly after 8:00 PM, the Douglas Co. Sheriff's Office received a cellular call from a lost hunter who had his 13 year old son with him. They did not have a compass or flashlight. Warden Biser and Deputy Warden Feind responded to assist. After two hours, someone in their hunting party found them on the Cedar Island Estate within a half mile of STH 27, and brought them to us. Both parties were in good health.

Licenses and tag system (include what is working/not working/suggested improvements):

Printing on the Tags – Generally, wardens reported that the tag layout and the printing are much clearer to read than in the past.

An Idea Worth Exploring? - Warden Wade Romberg (Appleton) suggests that the back tag number be the same as the last six of the customer ID number or at least eliminate one of the numbers in the backtag since there is no need to have a number that is seven digits and has to be printed in smaller font to fit on the tag.

Confusion About Tags – Although progress has been made, there is still some confusion on what tag is a Zone T tag and the regular gun deer tag. Numerous wardens report seeing confusion regarding what tags are appropriate in what units. Some counties have as many as five different zones.

Some wardens report that various deer registration stations are frustrated with the tags and the tagging options for the CWD zones. A good example of the changes observed since the 2002 season would be the changing buck tag. In 2002 and 2003 the earn-a-buck tag was a green tag, in 2004 it was an orange tag, and in 2005 it is a small blue buck sticker to be added to the back of a CWD tag.

The CWD deer season framework continues to spawn questions, confusion and sometimes frustration. Most of the questions are in regards to the EAB season framework and tagging options. EAB gun and archery seasons start and stop in the middle of the season causing hunters to not know what season is taking place. Hunters don't know what they can do in the

HRZ versus the DEZ, which firearms are legal, whether EAB is taking place and what tags to use. These are the most common questions.

Military Hunting Privileges - A law change is needed regarding the hunting privileges granted to members of the Armed Services. As it stands right now, only some military members get the privilege. Members of the National Guard are excluded from this, despite the fact that they are getting deployed overseas. In the one example below, the wardens acted appropriately and used proper discretion. However, it still makes us and the State look foolish. Warden Korey Trowbridge (Schofield) and Warden Supervisor Randy Falstad (WI Rapids) ran into a National Guardsman that was home on a 7 day pass prior to going to Iraq on the 30th. He was in a group of about 14 hunters and had shot a buck. The interpretation of the law that states the taking of a buck does not apply to National Guardsman was explained to him and the group. Both his Military ID and his leave papers listed him as US Army (not National Guard). We did not take any enforcement action nor did we seize the deer. Even so, the hunters still did not understand the law, and we not bashful in voicing their dissatisfaction.

One warden reported the CWD earn-a-buck stickers do not stick very well to the back of the tags. If the earn-a-buck sticker is not removed at registration, it could easily be removed and reused.

The new system with the one colored tags and the green earn a buck validation sticker is a plus as commented on by hunters and the registration stations. They are all in favor of the fewer tags, the better. One station commented that he has a firm grasp of the seasons, tags etc., but his part-time employees do not. Anything to make it easier is a plus.

Problems as well as positives encountered with the CWD seasons:

As always, many hunters are very happy to be hunting the early rut with a rifle and the CWD season allows them to hunt "trophy bucks". Many hunters are harvesting large bucks after earning them by shooting antlerless deer and are thrilled with the opportunity.

Head Collection Efforts - While staffing and overtime is an issue, some wardens suggest that we missed many opportunities to get deer heads by not starting to collect until 2 pm. Morning deer were brought in with people wanting to donate but no one was around.

Earn a Buck Prequalification - Warden Kuhn did not hear of any issues or complaints about the license issuance system. However he did encounter a number of hunters who were not aware of the likelihood of an earn a buck pre-qualification for next year's deer seasons. Warden Kuhn feels that the hunting pressure might have been higher if more hunters knew that they could earn their buck this year for next year's hunting seasons. We may want to consider more publicity on prequalification prior to deer season and include that fact that people need to have their customer ID on the stub they intend to use for prequalification.

Many wardens report having answered an incredible number of phone calls over the last several years on CWD season. There are no service centers in several of the SCR counties and the public has needs that are not being met, especially during the hunting seasons. A possible solution during the hunting seasons would be to have the service centers open during the weekends of busy hunting seasons in the CWD areas.

The constant change of CWD DEZ and HRZ boundaries from year to year continues to be an ongoing issue. Just when hunters begin getting use to a season framework, things change. Hunters still seem to be confused by tagging options. Hunters utilizing carcass tags are upset when they find out they did not have to use their kill tags to register deer in CWD areas. Hunters are confused this year with either sex mixed into an EAB season framework like we had last year. Blaze orange requirements during a gun deer season are often overlooked in DEZ where the season runs until March 31, 2006.

Suspected diseased deer turned in for replacement tags:

Warden Heather Gottschalk of Beaver Dam replaced a tag on deer that was very thin and losing its hair. This deer was shot a few miles east of the Columbia County line in Dodge County. Testing will be difficult as the deer was shot in the head.

Warden Mike Nice was contacted about a sick appearing deer and advised the hunter to take it to the DNR registration station in Richland Center where the hunter was issued another buck tag.

One ill appearing deer reported in Walworth County. Investigation by Warden Rick Reed revealed the deer was very likely injured by a car which may have accounted for its sick acting behavior. Reed collected the deer and has submitted it for testing.